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PARO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
A centre of excellence in education



Reimagining Education

From a Gross National Happiness (GNH) Perspective

International Symposium, June 1st - 6th, 2024, Paro, Bhutan



Co-hosted By:

Centre for Educational Research & Development, Paro
College of Education

Office of the Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan

Eurasia Foundation

Academy of Himalayan Art & Child Development

Prevention Research Center, Penn State University

A Welcome Invitation

Welcome to the Paro 2024 International Symposium, “Reimagining Education from a GNH Perspective”, hosted at the Paro College of Education. The event is devoted to exploring an education paradigm that represents education’s highest potential. The symposium is designed to allow a creative and collaborative space for meeting, sharing, learning, and reimagining education in the 21st century based on the framework of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

GNH is a Bhutanese developmental paradigm that seeks to find a balance between materialistic gains and sustainable and equitable human development. The underlying principles are informed by a holistic understanding of individuals, community, society, ecology, and life.

In 2010, Bhutan’s Ministry of Education introduced a whole country “Educating for GNH” initiative. The program was designed to infuse GNH-based values and principles, such as awareness, kindness, respect, compassion, gratitude, and resilience, into all aspects of school life. In retrospect, compared to the original vision, the program has achieved limited outcomes, due to challenges with implementation, program development, assessment, scaling, and sustainability.

However, Bhutan is poised now to engage in a renewed focus on GNH-based education. The Office of the Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan and Paro College of Education are taking the lead to re-initiate an academic dialogue for furthering understanding and action, based on the profound philosophy of GNH, so that this framework can enhance the quality of education for a better humanity.

We are looking forward to connecting with like-minded scholars, educators, thought leaders, institutes, organizations, and colleges, from around the world. Together, we hope to weave new professional networks, integrate our creative insights, and activate and mobilize our collective wisdom for a better future and world.

Nidup Dorji
Vice Chancellor
Royal University of Bhutan

“ The future is neither unseen nor unknown.
It is what we make of it. What work we do with our two
hands today will shape the future of our nation.
Our children’s tomorrow has to be created
by us today. ”

*His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck,
the Fifth King of Bhutan, 2008.*



“ Education can equip learners with agency and
a sense of purpose, and the competencies they need,
to shape their own lives and contribute
to the lives of others.

Education should be committed to helping every learner
develop as a whole person, fulfill his or her potential, and
help shape a shared future built on the
well-being of individuals, communities,
and the planet. ”

Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills, OECD, 2018



Reimagining Education from a GNH Perspective

The Paro 2024 International Symposium, “Reimagining Education from a GNH Perspective”, is an international collaboration and initiative, bringing together education experts, policymakers, education leaders, academic researchers, innovators, and activists from diverse countries and cultures across the globe to share, explore, and inquire the essential purpose of education from a GNH perspective.

At the core of the initiative is an invitation to envision a GNH-based education paradigm, and to discuss the principles, practices, programs, and implementation strategies needed to help create a responsible, holistic, humanistic, sustainable, and integrative education model. Current mainstream education does not meet the deeper needs of our children, educators, and families, nor does it adequately address the challenges facing our planet.

We feel strongly that it is our collective responsibility to act, gather our numerous educational perspectives, and ignite a worldwide inquiry into how to bring more wholeness, wisdom, heart, and human well-being into all levels of education. We believe in uniting our perspectives, insights, and creativity, envisioning the vital global shifts needed for our schools of education, public schools, universities, and educational communities.

We are thrilled to introduce a groundbreaking development in the international education landscape, as the OECD’s PISA survey, inspired by Gross National Happiness (GNH) indicators, is going to expand its focus and include students’ well-being assessments in addition to those focused on academic performance. This forward-thinking shift recognizes that education is not only about imparting knowledge but also about promoting the overall happiness and well-being of students. Bhutan, as the birthplace of GNH, could and should play a prominent role in this important shift.



Symposium Objectives

- To provide an opportunity for a global discourse that investigates an educational paradigm based on GNH perspectives.
- To translate this paradigm into practical approaches for school leaders, educators and students.
- To understand the gap/s between policy statements, noble visions, and ground realities.
- To strengthen the scientific evidence which is needed to promote a holistic/humanistic education, based on GNH principles.
- To showcase examples and explore best practices for translating GNH principles into school leadership, teacher education, curriculum design, school culture and climate, pedagogy, and educational assessment.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris

Professor Mark Greenberg, Professor Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University, Co-founder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), USA

Professor Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Rector, Islamic University, Malaysia

Dr. Dorji Thinley, President, Paro College of Education, Bhutan

Dr. Nguyen Van Phuc, Deputy Minister of Education, Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Professor Yael (Yuli) Tamir, President of Beit Berl College, former Minister of Education, Israel

Dr. Tho Ha Vinh, former Program Director of the GNH Center (Bhutan), and Co-founder of Eurasia Foundation, Vietnam

The International Organizing Committee:

Dasho Nidup Dorji, Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan

Ms. Karma Tshering, Registrar, Office of the Vice Chancellor, RUB, Bhutan

Dr. Dorji Thinley, President, Paro College of Education, Bhutan

Lopen Lungtaen Gyatso, President, College of Language and Cultural Studies, Bhutan

Dr. Kezang Sherab, Paro College of Education, Bhutan

Dr. Robert W. Roeser, Pennsylvania State University, USA

Dr. Ha Vinh Tho, Eurasia Foundation, Vietnam

Dr. Nimrod Sheinman, Center for Mind-Body Medicine, Israel

Ms. Jamyang Dolma, Academy of Himalayan Art & Child Development, Hawaii



Topics to be Discussed:

Educational Philosophy, Policies, and Visions

- The need for a paradigm shift in education
- International perspectives
- Bhutanese perspectives

Educational Research, Programs, and Practices

- Highlight exemplary educational programs from around the world
- Present research on school leader, teacher, and student programs
- Discuss best practices and implementation strategies

Transforming Visions into Future Actions

- Identifying implementation models, as well as barriers and challenges
- Identifying levers for change, from science to policy, and from policy to practice
- Continuing education – focusing on the learnings and steps we can take back home
- Creating a global network for collaboration, linking together educational stakeholders worldwide



Registration and Administration

Registration form is available at: www.pce.edu.bt/gnheducation.symposium

The last date for registration: May 20, 2024

The registration fee includes a 6-night accommodation (June 1-6), meals, coffee breaks, visa, local transportation including airport pick-up and drop, the symposium package, and all specified events during the symposium.

The 6-day event will include visits to local schools, monasteries, and sites, as well as a hike to Paro Taktsang (Tiger's Nest Monastery).

Accommodations will be arranged in standard hotels in the Paro Valley, most of which are within a 10-20 minute drive from the Paro College of Education, where the symposium will be held.

Registration Fees	Early Bird Rate (Before May 1st, 2024)	Standard Rate (May 1st - 20th, 2024)
Developing Countries	US \$1000	US \$1100
Developed Countries	US \$1500	US \$1600

Paro Airport is the international gateway to Bhutan, with daily flights from India, Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Singapore. Flights are operated by two airlines:

Druk Air www.drukair.com.bt and Bhutan Airlines www.bhutanairlines.bt . For any further queries, please write to us at: kezangsherab.pce@rub.edu.bt, Phone [+975-17957949](tel:+975-17957949)

